

Wichita Daily Eagle

MONKEY HARVESTERS.

Wichita, Mo., Sept. 1.—(Special.)

Grandpa took Harry and Jolker with him upon a trip to Mexico. "Ahi, this is like India," said Harry, "only much more beautiful."

Grandpa had come on business which made it necessary to go on horseback far up into the country. Harry rode a pretty Mexican pony named Chichu (Chichu). Jolker used to ride beside him. All three were great friends.

Jolker often wondered if any of his relations lived in Mexico. So far he had not met any. One day, however, while riding past a corn field, he caught sight of a troop of queer little folk making for it. By a pinch he urged his young master to look that way.

"What is that moving yonder? Why, there are so many I could not count them all; what can they be?" cried Harry, turning to the man with the big hat and high boots, and silver lace on his clothes, who acted as guide.

"Only monkeys," he answered, in broken English. "The request they are earliest at the harvest. From behind these trees you can watch them."

"The monkeys drive the corn?" It was the strongest expression Harry ever saw. An old fellow, the chief of the band, walked ahead upon two legs, carrying a staff in his hand to help him keep upright. The others followed on all fours, from time to time looking to him for directions.

Then by a queer noise the leader called a halt. He motioned to several monkeys who took their stand as sentinels at different points, for they seemed to think the owner might object to having his corn gleaned by such harvesters. Then the chief and the

monks, of course, tire some and monotonous, but the work in itself was not difficult, as the *terra templada* is unusually free from natural obstructions. The only really objectionable feature was the presence of a large number of native Indians and Mexican half-breeds, who seemed to regard us intuitively as worthy of nothing better than the most hearty contempt and as the source of continual apprehension.

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For a time I was inclined to view them askance, for I knew the aboriginal characteristics of cunning and treachery. As time wore on, however, I came to look upon them differently, and considered that they had become reconciled, as it were, to our presence and that we need fear no outbreaks from them as long as they were not molested. I was mistaken, as the incident which I am about to relate will demonstrate.

Along in the latter part of September, near the completion of the survey, in fact it was the very last trip I made over the southern division of the line, I had been to Hermosillo for implements and supplies, and had occasion to run down to Maytorena, near Haro on the Gulf. While at this latter place I met an old man who had formerly been in my employ and who was doing service on a merchant-man, then in the docks at Long Bridge. Like most of his fellows he was, to use the sailor dialect, "winded" financially. Seeking about for some article to offer me as security, and as an inducement to advance cash, he bawled from the hold of the vessel and brought to me an old fifty-two inch Columbia bicycle. I owned a wheel myself, and while home was in the habit of riding continually. The thought occurred to me that I might obtain considerable pleasure and also physical exercise by using this one; and so, advancing a few dollars, I took the machine.

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A TWENTY-MILE DASH.

Thrilling Adventure On a Wheel in Mexico.

(Original.)

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Instructing the Navajo to follow me the next day with the provisions, I mounted and rode slowly out toward the long stretch of country. I executed a few trick maneuvers and soon felt perfectly at ease. My actions were viewed by the young Navajo with open-mouthed wonderment. The use of the strange two-wheeled affair that he had dived upon his conception, although during the journey to Maybelos I had caught him more than once ogling the concern, and handling it very gingerly. He was indeed puzzled, I rode a distance with my legs over the handle-bars, and then dismounted suddenly a *la leoprog*. This capped the climax, and the last I ever saw of Navajo he was making his reputation as a sprinter at a 2:30 gait in the opposite direction.

But to my story: I rode out upon the old path and found the soil as I had expected, hard and level. Striking an easy rate of speed I was away; my ride had commenced. I had ridden possibly a mile, when I observed to the east and a little way ahead of me, a tiny wreath of blue smoke—I had to look twice to distinguish it from vapor—rising from a clump of pines. I knew what it was. It told me that there was a camp there. I guessed the rest: a roving band of half-breeds and red-skin trappers were resting thereabout. Whether my way lay directly to this spot or not I was at a loss then to tell. As I proceeded, however, this proved to be the fact. I was not exactly satisfied what course to pursue, but recollecting that since our stay in the region none of our party had ever received bodily injury from the "ringers," I resolved to continue my way, attracting as little attention as possible. Perchance I could pass them unobserved. As I neared the place I found that my course was some twelve or more miles from where the camp was. Under cover of some shrub which lined the trail for a considerable distance at this point, I was able to reconnoiter. There were fifteen "ringers" in all. Four of these were half-breeds, five native Indians, three Apache and the remainder Creoles. I must confess that I would have given a little for the privilege of altering the situation somewhat. However, I saw that I was "in for it," and placing my feet resolutely to the pedals I continued at an increased speed. I saw that I would be obliged to leave the friendly cover of the shrubbery ere long, and pass over a stretch of about five rods unscanned. If I could make this distance without being discovered I was safe. I resolved to try. Seizing the pedals revolving merrily I flew out from the bushes and across the intervening space at a high speed. I was half way across and beginning to breathe much easier, when I saw, coming along the trail a few feet ahead of me, a big Creole bull carrying a huge gourd filled with water, evidently from a spring near by. At the instant he caught sight of me, I will never forget the look that came over his face. With a yell that would have made a steam-whistle blush in envy, he sprang into the air, and dropping his gourd, fell head foremost in the patch. This was a beautiful state of affairs for me! Hearing his cry of alarm his companions had jumped as one man, and stood gazing transfixed in statue-like amazement at the strange scene that must have greeted their eyes. The next minute both wheels of my machine had passed over the body of the prostrate Creole, and I had disappeared into the shrubbery. The reader may surmise that I did not dismount and return to ascertain whether or not I had crushed the breath out of the unfortunate Creole's body. On the contrary I put spurs to my steed, as it were, and dashed on faster still. My apprehensions were thoroughly aroused. The question forced itself into my mind: "What will the result of the occurrence be—will the 'ringers' give chase?" I felt sure that if I had seriously injured the Creole his companions would certainly follow me for by them the love of revenge is regarded as one of the noblest instincts, and the greatest incentive to belligerent effort. I had not long to wait for an answer. My alert ears detected the sound of hoof beats; I was being pursued! I observed that there was one fact at least to my advantage, my wheel left no mark upon the trail as the earth was so unusually hard. If the "ringers" really meant business they would be obliged to employ every tactic available to their versatile minds in order to follow me. Whether they would follow me for any length of time was a matter of conjecture; it was at present enough for me to realize that the clatter of hoofs was becoming much more audible. I was certain, though, that they had not caught sight of me yet.

I covered three miles without material change in affairs; in fact, I thought the sounds were hardly as distinct as formerly. I had not proceeded a mile further before they sank away altogether. The "ringers" had either given up the chase entirely, or were off the scent. In either event I was afforded the needed opportunity of rest, for the unusual exercise was beginning to affect me. I continued at a moderate rate until coming upon a clearing I was able to take a look about me. I detected far to the right, and several yards ahead of me, my pursuers. They were evidently trying to head me off, and they were ahead in the race, too! In another instant I was dashing down the trail fairly cutting the air in my flight.

For four miles I rode on. My muscles were strained to their utmost tension; the wheels of my machine seemed to hum as they revolved. The open-ings became more frequent, and I saw that while I had gained considerable as to relative position, the "ringers" were much nearer to me than before. I attempted to locate the angle at which they would intercept the trail. Then it was I remembered that for seven miles near its end the trail lay over a plateau absolutely devoid of bushes or trees. I would therefore be afforded no means of concealment. My heart sank. What should I do, forsake my wheel and, waiting under cover till night, steal out on foot and complete the journey under cover of darkness? No! That would be too rash, for if the "ringers" failed to head me off they would be sure to return and scour the trail from end to end. They would surely discover me then. There was but one thing to do—stick it out, and trust to providence! With a firm resolve to "do or die" I sped on.

I flew out from the last clump of shrub and shot away across the plain. I had gone some distance before the "ringers" saw me. The shout of mingled joy and rage which came to my

ears as they perceived me, sent a chill through my whole body. I saw them turn their mustangs quick to the left. This unexpected movement indicated that they had not known my whereabouts before, but were merely following the direction I had taken when I was seen. In turning sharp toward me it was their intention to overtake me immediately. This maneuver allowed me to gain greatly upon them, and I felt sure that I could out-distance them, but soon seeing their mistake they resumed their former course, evidently satisfied to intercept my way at the angle. I realized that I had my hands full, and although I had a good half-mile lead, I needed every inch of it. What a race it would be! The stakes were worth winning, too—especially to me!

Nearer and nearer came the "ringers" as the distance to the angle decreased. Slowly but surely they were gaining! I could hear the hoof-beats plainly now. As for myself I was becoming exhausted. The strain upon my nerves was terrible. Of a sudden a

thought flashed through my brain that well-nigh paralyzed me. About half a mile south of the station the trail crossed a ravine one hundred and thirty feet in depth. There had formerly been a rude bridge there, but the action of the elements had long since demolished this structure, and I recollected that upon my last journey over the trail I had been obliged to cross this gully upon a narrow plank at least twenty feet in length. If I could reach this place before the "ringers" and crossing, draw the plank after me, "ringers" reach there first, and worst of all, what if the plank be gone entirely! The thought was sickening!

My attention at this point was attracted to my pursuers. One of the number had been precipitated from his saddle. This event caused the whole party to draw rein for an instant, but they were shortly to hoof again with renewed strength. I could distinguish their angry voices as they came on. I looked ahead and estimated the distance. It was a good two miles at least. I was glad that I had covered nearly five miles of the plateau.